

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Executive Council Advisory Questions

Question 44: Deer Season Framework

Deer hunting in Wisconsin is more than just killing deer. The deer hunting heritage and tradition have very deep roots within our society. Many Wisconsin hunters rate the deer season and the ability to hunt with family and friends as their most important social event of the year.

DNR imposed changes to the deer seasons over the last several years have negatively impacted many hunting traditions. T-Zones and especially Earn-A-Buck seasons have alienated hunters in almost every part of the state. The 2004 deer season is either an example of an overestimated deer herd or an underestimation of hunter response to further restrictions or maybe both.

In the CWD deer management units the department's stated goal is to reduce the deer population. In these units the department forces the hunter to kill an antler-less deer before killing a buck. The research shows that bucks are more likely to spread CWD but buck harvest is restricted. This is counterproductive to eradicating CWD and reducing the deer herd. Hunters should be encouraged to shoot any deer within the CWD units.

The Executive Council of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress believes the DNR would receive more hunter support by eliminating T-Zone and Earn-A-Buck seasons and establishing all of the following:

1. An either sex bow season with free antler-less permit(s) that could be used in any unit with an antler-less quota.
2. Elimination of the October gun hunt.
3. A 9-day general deer season (hunter's choice of weapon) starting the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Free antler-less permit(s) that could be used in any unit with an antler-less quota.
4. Retain the current muzzleloader season with the same tagging options as the general season.
5. Establish a statewide antler-less 4-day season in the 2nd week of December for all units with an antler-less quota.
6. Create an either-sex season for all deer hunting in the CWD Zone.

➤ **Do you support the above position of the Executive Council?**

44. YES _____ NO _____

Question 45: Rifle Use for Deer Hunting Lafayette County

Unit 75D, which consists of mostly Lafayette County, has always been designated as a shotgun only area for deer hunting. With a part of this unit now being designated as a CWD Intensive Harvest Zone which will include opening up that part for deer rifle, we feel this whole unit should be designated a deer rifle area for deer hunting. Lafayette County has less density for population than compared to Dane County and the CWD eradication zone in Dane County was changed from shotgun only for deer hunting to allowing deer rifles two seasons ago. In the past 2 deer hunting seasons, there were no reported accidents with deer rifles in Dane County.

➤ **Should the DNR take action to allow deer hunting with rifles in Lafayette County?**

45. YES _____ NO _____

Question 46: Rifle Use for Deer Hunting Kewaunee County

Deer hunters in Kewaunee County are restricted to the use of shotguns, handguns, and muzzleloaders to harvest deer during the gun deer seasons. There are no biological or safety reasons for the current restriction.

At present, state law does not permit the use of rifles for the hunting of deer in Kewaunee County. We feel that Wisconsin law should allow for the use of rifles to hunt deer during the gun deer seasons in Kewaunee County.

Unit 80B (which includes all of Kewaunee County) has been selected to be an Earn-A-Buck unit for 2004 due to the fact that Unit 80B has been a Zone-T for the last four years in a row (2002-2003). Rifles are more accurate and have a greater range. This may be beneficial in increasing the harvest of deer in a management unit (0B) that has been over its target population for several years in a row.

There is no data that indicates shotgun-only counties are safer than counties that allow the use of rifles. In reality, shotgun-only areas account for a higher percentage of hunting incidents (shotgun only zones make up 33% of the state yet account for 44% of all hunting incidents).

- **Should the DNR take action to allow the use of rifles to hunt deer in Kewaunee County?**

46. YES _____ NO _____

Question 47: Lowering the Hunting Age

The Wisconsin State Legislature is taking up a proposal to lower the hunting age in Wisconsin to the age of 10 (currently the age is 12). The Wisconsin Conservation Congress would like to forward to the Legislature the view of the Wisconsin residents on this issue.

Currently there are 35 other states in the nation that have a hunting age lower than 12. It is important to note each state has their own specific stipulations to the regulation on child under the age of 12 hunting. The details of such regulation will be handled in the legislature but the point of this question is to gauge the public on approval of the concept of lowering the hunting age below the current age of 12.

- **Do you approve the concept of Wisconsin lowering the hunting age from 12 to 10?**

47. YES _____ NO _____

Question 48: Exotic Aquatic Species

There are over 15,000 lakes and 32,000 miles of fresh water rivers and streams and numerous public wetlands within the State of Wisconsin, and these fresh water resources belong to all citizens of the State as guaranteed by the State Constitution and affirmed by numerous court rulings.

These water resources are the backbone of Wisconsin's \$11.7 billion tourist industry, which ranks as the third largest industry in the State. The invasion of exotic aquatic species of plant and animal life have detrimentally impacted a significant percentage of the State's water resources by reducing the quality, desirability and ability to provide recreational, economic, subsistence, and cultural opportunities. The Public Trust Doctrine mandates that the State of Wisconsin has the responsibility for protecting these public water resources for its citizens.

- **Do you favor the Legislature exercising its responsibility by establishing a reliable, renewable, and adequate funding system and aggressive policies for research, prevention, best management practices, and public education for currently identified and future exotic aquatic plant and animal species in the State's natural water resources?**

48. YES _____ NO _____

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Big Game Committee Question
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Question 49: Earn-A-Buck – December Antlerless

At this time the DNR is experiencing problems harvesting antlerless deer statewide. If there is an overpopulation of deer in northern Wisconsin hunters feel they should have the opportunity to use all tools available to get the population under control. It is felt there is no biological reason why hunters can't participate in a December antlerless hunt North of Hwy 8 other than a special interest group not wanting it.

- **Do you support that before the DNR can institute an Earn-A-Buck season in any deer management unit north of Hwy 8 hunters shall have two years of December antlerless hunts first?**

49. YES _____ NO _____

Question 50: Private Land versus Public Land Harvest Information

The past few seasons there has been controversy over the number of deer present in Wisconsin, in addition there are complaints from hunters that there is a large discrepancy between the number of deer on private land vs. public land. It is felt that a better grasp of deer numbers on private land vs. public land could be helpful in determining the usefulness of T-Zones. It is also felt the DNR can do little to force private land owners to harvest higher numbers of antlerless deer while at the same time public lands may be experiencing an over harvest.

- **Do you support changes requiring hunters to mark on their registration stub whether the deer being registered was harvested on public or private land?**

50. YES _____ NO _____

Question 51: Landowner Preference Transfer to Any Youth Under 18

Many of today's youth do not have direct ties to hunting. In order to recruit youth into hunting it is essential to make as many opportunities as possible for them. Current regulations prohibit the transfer of landowner preference to youth other than a son or daughter for hunter's choice or turkey permits.

- **Do you support the DNR make rule changes that allow any landowner to transfer their landowner preference to any youth under the age of 18?**

51. YES _____ NO _____

Question 52: Free Antlerless Tags

Over the years the DNR has tried many ways to increase the antlerless harvest. Currently only one free antlerless tag is issued per license, after that each additional antlerless tag has a \$12 fee. It is proposed that during a T-Zone or earns a buck season that the DNR would give out 2 free tags per license. Then when an antler-less deer is registered another free antler-less tag would be issued. It is felt that more hunters would take advantage of harvesting more deer whether for themselves or to donate to food pantry's etc.

- **Do you support the DNR make rule changes that give hunters free antler-less tags?**

52. YES _____ NO _____

<p>Wisconsin Conservation Congress Environmental Practices Committee Question</p>

Question 53: Restore Full Permitting Process For Certain Waters Affected By Act 118, The "Jobs Creation Act"

The "Jobs Creation Act" eliminated certain permit requirements DNR had in place for activities within the state shore land areas. Certain groups loudly protested the temporary rules of Act 118, and the Joint Legislative Committee for Review of Administrative Rules threatened to suspend all permits requirements. DNR reacted by removing four categories of waters from older permit requirements, and placed these four categories in the "streamlined" permit process.

The four categories removed from full permit review were (1) Self-sustaining musky waters, (2) self-sustaining walleye waters, (3) tributaries and connecting rivers used by lake sturgeon in their annual life cycle, and (4) perennial tributaries to trout streams.

The Environmental Practices Committee questions this action as possibly conflicting with Article IX of the Wisconsin Constitution and the Public Trust Doctrine. The Committee feels development activities near these four water categories needs full review by the DNR.

- **Do you favor restoring full permit review for activities on these four water categories?**

53. YES _____ NO _____

Question 54: Providing Increased Protection to Wisconsin Rivers, Creeks and Streams

Currently, Wisconsin waters that meet specific criteria are eligible for added protection from development activities. These are classified as “Outstanding Resource Waters” and “Exceptional Resource Waters.”

Waters not in either category are placed in a “default category” of “warm water sport fishery.” There are 1,496 portions of rivers, creeks and streams, many meeting “outstanding resource waters” that are in the “default category.”

By placing these waters in the lower “exceptional resource waters” list, they would receive added protection. If petitioned to have them removed from the list, the business, person or entity filing the petition would have to fund the study for removal.

- **Do you favor increased protection for our rivers, streams and creeks by eliminating the “default category” and placing all 1,496 portions of rivers, creeks and streams in the “exceptional resource waters” list?**

54. YES _____ NO _____

Question 55: Asking For Increased Penalties and Added DNR Enforcement Authority Concerning Exotic Species

Current DNR authority limits when citations can be written for possessing exotic species. For instance, a boat trailer parked at a motel, or other private parking lots that has lake weeds hanging from it, cannot receive a ticket from a warden. Already over 400 lakes have been infested with Eurasian Water Milfoil, many lakes have Rusty Crayfish. The penalties for having exotic species such as Eurasian Water Milfoil or Snakehead fish are minimal. The Environmental Practices Committee is asking for your opinion if both penalties for possessing exotic species should be increased, and if there should be added DNR enforcement authority concerning exotic species.

- **Should the Wisconsin Legislature enact increased penalties for possessing exotic species and provide the DNR with added enforcement authority?**

55. YES _____ NO _____

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Fur Harvest Committee Question

Question 56: Bobcat Harvest Zone Expansion

The bobcat is very much sought after by trappers and hunters alike.

According to the 2003 Department of Natural Resources population estimate, the bobcat population in the present harvest zone was at 2,590. The population goal is 1,800. The 2003-harvest goal was 256. This goal was exceeded by 72 bobcats, or 28%. In other words, bobcats are doing well in Wisconsin.

Most parties feel that a bobcat population, large enough to support a sustained harvest, probably exists south of State Trunk Highway 64 (*the southerly extent of the current bobcat harvest zone*) and north of State Trunk Highway 29. Expanding the bobcat harvest zone to include all, or part of that area, would provide additional opportunities to trappers and hunters by making bobcats in that area available for harvest. Such an expansion has not been possible, due to an absence of population data to support it. Because population data is normally collected through the registration of harvested animals, and through examination of the surrendered carcasses of harvested animals, the needed data is not forthcoming.

This data could be collected through a temporary season which would sunset after a short period of years, or through the use of scientific collectors permits which would be used by selected hunters and trappers to collect the needed carcasses.

- **Do you support the collection of bobcat population data, including carcass collection, and the identification of additional areas for the expansion of the bobcat harvest zone?**

56. YES _____ NO _____

Question 57: Damage Control Fur Utilization

Harvest seasons, for fur bearing animals, are designed to coincide with periods during which furs are most salable. However, furbearers are harvested year round, in Wisconsin, for nuisance control purposes. Trappers who engage in nuisance control activities would like to utilize the fur of “out of season” furs. Although these furs are not as dense or prime as “in season” fur, they have some value. Failing to use them for whatever purpose possible, is contrary to the ideals of conservation.

Currently, only furs harvested during open season, may be bought or sold in Wisconsin.

- **Do you favor allowing the sale of furs, legally caught during nuisance control activities, outside of the regular harvest season?**

57. YES _____ NO _____

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Great Lakes Committee Question

Question 58: Exotic Species

There are numerous exotic species spreading throughout Wisconsin. Some of these species include the Big Head Carp, Silver Carp, Snakehead fish, Zebra Mussels, Eurasian Water Milfoil and Purple Loosestrife. Also the WDNR is detecting the presence of diseases such as Large Mouth Bass Virus, which is known to originate from aquarium fish.

All of these exotic species will have a very adverse impact on our fisheries in Wisconsin. At present there seems to be very little enforcement and very small penalties associated with the illegal transportation and introduction of these exotic species into our eco-system in Wisconsin.

- **Should the WDNR take action to correct this situation by introducing stronger rules of enforcement, as it pertains to the illegal transportation and introduction of any exotic species deemed by the WDNR to be a detriment to the eco-system in Wisconsin?**

58. YES _____ NO _____

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Hunting with Dogs Committee Question

Question 59: Zone A Ruffed Grouse Extended Season

Ruffed grouse hunting closes in Zone A (Northern) on December 31st, one month before the close in Zone B (Western), January 31st. The ruffed grouse population is higher in the northern zone but the season is shorter. Lengthening the season in this area would not significantly reduce populations. Hunting pressure would be light at this time of the year relative to the prime time of ruffed grouse hunting season *mid-October through mid-November) but for grouse hunters, bird dog enthusiasts and the general hunting public, the lengthened season would provide expanded hunting, dog working and recreational opportunities.

Zone B has lower ruffed grouse populations but longer season than Zone A. Extending the season in Zone A would not significantly impact ruffed grouse populations. Extending the season in Zone A will provide additional hunting, dog training and outdoor recreation activities for an extended period.

- **Do you favor extending the ruffed grouse season by one month from its present closing date of December 31st to January 31st by making the closing date in Zone A the same as in Zone B?**

59. YES _____ NO _____

Question 60: Bobcat Zone Expansion

The Bobcat is a very much sought after furbearing animal by trappers and hunters alike.

The population goal of the bobcat in the present zone is at 2,590. The Departments population goal is 1,800 in other words bobcats are doing well. In 2003, the DNR wanted to harvest 256 bobcat, which was reached and exceeded by 72 bobcats which is a 28% over harvest. By expanding the area to harvest bobcats this would provide more opportunity.

If the bobcat population is doing so well North of Hwy 64 there should be a viable population South of Hwy 64 to trap or hunt. There is no biological reason or social reason why bobcats cannot be trapped or hunted South of Hwy 64.

- **Would you favor the DNR take steps to expand the area open to trap or hunt bobcat to South of Hwy 64?**

60. YES _____ NO _____

Question 61: Fisher Season

Presently hunters have no opportunity to aid in the harvest of Fisher. Trapping is not the only viable way harvest Fisher. Many outdoors persons do not trap, and would like to harvest a Fisher. By allowing hunting to be used to manage and harvest Fisher anyone holding a valid Small Game hunting or trapping license would be allowed to harvest a Fisher during the Fisher harvest season with a Fisher harvest tag.

- **Do you favor allowing hunting to be used to manage and harvest Fisher during the annual Fisher Harvest season?**

61. YES _____ NO _____

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Legislative Committee Question

Question 62: Feral Cats

Studies have been done in Wisconsin concerning effects of free roaming feral domestic cats. These studies showed free roaming feral domestic cats killed millions of small mammals, song and game birds. Estimates range from a minimum of 47 million up to 139 million songbirds are killed each year. Free roaming feral domestic cats are not a native species in Wisconsin. The above mentioned cats do however kill native species therefore reducing native species.

At present free roaming feral domestic cats are not defined as a protected or unprotected species. Thus Wisconsin should move to define free roaming feral domestic cats, as any domestic type cat which is not under the owner's direct control, or whose owner has not placed a collar on such cat showing it to be their property. All such defined free roaming feral domestic cats shall be listed as an unprotected species. In so doing Wisconsin would be defining and listing free roaming feral domestic cats.

- **Do you favor the DNR take steps to define free roaming feral domestic cats by the previously mentioned definition and list free roaming domestic feral cats as an unprotected species?**

62. YES _____ NO _____

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Migratory Committee Question

Question 63: Waterfowl Blinds on State Owned Property

Currently the use of permanent waterfowl blinds is allowed on state owned land, which includes the bottom of lakes for waterfowl hunting. This practice causes issues with hunters claiming "ownership of a hunting spot", even though the use of a permanent waterfowl blind is traditionally on a first come, first serve basis. With the current availability of portable waterfowl blinds this practice may no longer be necessary.

This practice is also said to cause refuse to be left in the marsh by waterfowl blind builders that don't clean up after themselves when the season closes. Boards with nails in them, posts left imbedded in lake bottoms, all can potentially cause injury to other hunters, dogs, and other water related recreational users.

- **Do you feel that permanently constructed waterfowl blinds on state owned property including the bottoms of lakes should be eliminated?**

63. YES _____ NO _____

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Mississippi River Committee Question

Question 64: Environmental Impact Study for the Upper Mississippi River

In 1993, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began a study to examine the need to increase the efficiency of the commercial navigation on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. This original purpose for the study was called into question in 1999 and resulted in a restructuring of the study in 2001. In the restructured study the Corps of Engineers was required to balance the needs of both commercial navigation and the nationally significant ecosystem of the Upper Mississippi River.

The resultant, Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement outlines a 50-year plan with a 15-year initial implementation plan for commercial navigation improvements and ecosystem restoration for both river systems. This plan would build on but not replace the experience and knowledge gained through the Environmental Management Program. Using 12 different measures of ecosystem restoration like island building, backwater dredging, side channel restoration, water level management, fish passage, shoreline stabilize and forest management to name a few, the river managers will have the opportunity to restore one of the most important ecosystems in the Upper Midwest.

This plan would also provide the Corps of Engineers with the authority to manage for ecosystem restoration as well as the existing authority to manage for commercial navigation.

- **Should the Conservation Congress strongly urge the Wisconsin Federally Elected Officials to do their utmost to enact federal legislation to provide the proper authority and resources necessary to balance the needs of ecosystem restoration and commercial navigation improvements for the Upper Mississippi River as recommended in the Final Feasibility Report and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement?**

64. YES _____ NO _____

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Outdoor Heritage Question

Question 65: Reinstate Funding for Private Shooting Ranges with Public Access

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, in 2001, discontinued funding improvements for private shooting ranges. Shooting ranges provide opportunities for young hunter education students and the public for shooting.

Funding for shooting ranges has come from the Pittman-Robertson excise taxes on firearms and ammunition. Shooting ranges are important to all residents of Wisconsin. Shooting ranges are investments in our shooting and hunting heritage.

- **Do you recommend that the Department of Natural Resources provide funding to private ranges that are open to the public as established in agreement by the Department?**

65. YES _____ NO _____

Question 66: Atlatl and Dart Use for Harvest of Fish and Game

The Bow and Arrow are not the novel invention people today believe it to be, but rather a progression of existing technology. The existing technology, for thousands of years was that of the atlatl and dart. Like the bow, the atlatl accelerates a flexible shaft from the rear. For the bow, the flexible shaft is called an arrow. For the atlatl, the flexible shaft is called a dart.

Research by BPS Engineering has proven that the only difference between these two weapons—and a minor at that—is the type of acceleration imparted to the rear of the flexible shaft. The bow is linear accelerator, accelerating the arrow from the rear in a straight line. The atlatl is an angular accelerator, accelerating the dart from the rear in an arc. But, appearances aside, both physically and mathematically, the bow and the atlatl are exactly the same type of weapon. *For more information, please visit:*
www.atlatl.com

The atlatl and dart is an effective hunting tool and has been used for hunting purposes around the world for years. The atlatl is a functional equivalent of a traditional bow. Presently the atlatl and dart is legal to use for hunting and/or fishing purposes in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Texas, Tennessee, Rhode Island, and Hawaii. Current Wisconsin regulations do not permit the use of the atlatl and dart for the harvest of wild game.

- **Would you be in favor of increasing public opportunities by allowing the atlatl and dart to be used for the harvest of fish and game with regulations similar to current archery regulations?**

66. YES _____ NO _____

Question 67: First Year Hunters

Recruitment of new hunters is a significant issue facing the future of hunting. Several national studies have shown that the requirement to take a basic hunter education course is a limiting factor.

One possible solution is to allow first year hunters to hunt, without the hunter's education certificate under the direct supervision of an adult. This would give people the opportunity to try the sport without investing a lot of time initially. Once the initial year is over, that person would be required to attend hunter's education or not hunt at all.

- **Would you accept a person of legal hunting age to not have the Hunter's Education requirements apply to their first year of hunting, with the stipulation that the person must be within arm's reach of an appropriately licensed adult?**

67. YES _____ NO _____

Question 68: Youth Possession of a Firearm

Currently under state law, children under 12 years old cannot target shoot or discharge a firearm even with direct parental supervision. Under current law it is illegal for a person under the age of 12 to possess or control a firearm unless they are enrolled in a hunter education course and the activity is part of that course.

- **Do you favor the Department of Natural Resources taking action to change laws to allow a person under the age of 12 to possess, control, and discharge a firearm under the supervision of an adult?**

68. YES _____ NO _____

Question 69: Youth Hunting

Currently under state law a parent or legal guardian must accompany hunters 12 and 13 years of age.

- **Do you support a change that would allow 12 and 13 year olds to hunt while accompanied by a parent or guardian or other adult?**

69. YES _____ NO _____

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Upland Game Committee Question

Question 70: Hunting with Crossbows

Wisconsin law currently limits crossbow use to hunters with class A, B, C disabled permits and hunters over the age of 65. Hunting conditions have changed. Times have significantly changed to warrant the removal of the previous use restrictions from crossbow hunting.

- **Do you favor removing the class A, B, C disabled permit and age restrictions from the crossbow hunting regulations?**

70. YES _____ NO _____

Question 71: Put and Take Pheasant Stamp Program

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress at their annual meeting in 2004 approved the concept of financing the pheasant raising and release program for hunting with revenue received from the sale of additional \$10 permits. The revenue from the sale of additional pheasant tags would be designated solely for the purpose of funding the "Put and Take" Game Farm program at Poynette, Wisconsin. The stocking programs for hunting and would be conducted on public grounds.

- **Would you be in favor of allowing multiple purchases per hunter of pheasant tags in \$10 lots?**

71. YES _____ NO _____

Question 72: Splitting Pheasant Stamp Money

Presently, the Pheasant Stamp statute only allows funds from Pheasant Stamp sales to be used for developing and maintain pheasant habitat. Often, because habitat funded private lands are not open to public hunting, it does not provide pheasant hunting opportunities for many hunters who are required to purchase a Pheasant Stamp.

- **Would you favor changing the Pheasant Stamp statute to allow one half of moneys raised by the Pheasant Stamp to be dedicated to raising and stocking of Put and Take pheasants on stated owned properties?**

72. YES _____ NO _____

<p>Wisconsin Conservation Congress Warm Water Committee Question</p>

Question 73: Musky Stamp

The WDNR 2004 Wisconsin Fishing Report states production for Muskellunge fingerlings in 2004 will be cut in half due to state budget cuts. A 50% reduction in stocking, coupled with harvest, puts the future of some state Musky fisheries in peril. If stocking is reduced or stopped, it will take many years to re-establish populations. More funding is needed for research, habitat protection and stocking to effectively manage Muskies. Current funding, which may be further reduced, is insufficient to meet these goals. A Musky stamp would support our musky management program. This stamp would not replace general fund sources but support and enhance them.

- **Would you support a Musky stamp?**

73. YES _____ NO _____

Question 74: One Line Motor Trolling

The current positioning regulation has many flaws and should be replaced. The State of Wisconsin allows motor trolling in designated areas to increase fishing interest and tourism. It is recommended that one line per person, without the aid of down riggers or planer boards, be instituted, plus one additional line for casting in those waters not currently covered. This will insure better uniformity and law enforcement throughout the state of Wisconsin,

➤ **Do you favor motor trolling with one line as described in the above description?**

74. YES _____ NO _____